



Photos by Diana Haecker  
**CROW'S-NEST (right)**—Icebreaker *Polar Sea* Captain Carl Uchtyl shows Nome Mayor Denise Michels the view from the ship's crow's-nest, looking at the lane of open water left behind the icebreaker, on Sunday, April 27.

**IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT (top)**— Ensign Joseph Prado and LTJG Cheryl Hickey are the eyes of the US Coast Guard icebreaker *Polar Sea*, steering the ship through the ice.



**BREAKING THE ICE**— The view from the crow's-nest shows the ship's bow cutting through a cake of sea ice with Nome in the distance.

## • *Polar Sea*

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where cooks were preparing dinner. In a different part of the ship, meteorologists interpret weather charts, the doctor tends to the "sick" station and after a very steep climb up six flights, Uchtyl and Michels arrived at the crow's-nest, where Ensign Joseph Prado and LTJG Cheryl Hickey function as the eyes of the ship.

The two, enjoying most definitely the smallest room with the biggest view, are navigating the ship through the sea ice and demonstrate how the ice breaker chews its way through a cake of ice, leaving a wake of ice cubes, tainted brown from churned up algae, tumbling in the water.

Hickey said that the icebreaker easily breaks through ice six feet thick, while the ship makes three knots. Uchtyl explained that the ship

due to its spoon-shaped bow, rides up on the ice and then crushes it with its weight — a respectable 13,000 tons — muscling through ice up to 21 feet thick. Commissioned in 1978, the ship was built by Lockheed Shipbuilding and Construction Company of Seattle along with her sister ship, *Polar Star*. The *Polar Sea* has supported antarctic science missions in the past.

Uchtyl said that Nome will mark the turn-around point for their journey, as the Coast Guard respected the Alaska Whaling Commission's wish to not proceed further north due to the spring whale hunting season.

The Coast Guard cutter *Healy* is also on its way to the region, with the mission to do a comprehensive study of the ecosystem in the Bering Sea.

## April was

### *Sexual Assault Awareness Month*

Executive Proclamation by Gov. Sarah Palin

*Whereas*, Alaska continues to have the highest per capital occurrence of sexual assault in the nation at 2.5 times the national average. It is estimated that one-in-three women, one-in-four girls, one-in-six boys, and one-in-eleven men will be victims of sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.

*Whereas*, it is important that sexual assault be recognized as a problem in every community, large and small, in Alaska. Sexual violence is preventable. Speaking out against sexual assault is an important first step to eliminating this devastating crime.

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